

Town of Hot Springs
Board of Alderman
Regular Meeting
May 11, 2026

Present:

Mayor Abigail Norton
Alderman Lisa Gahagan
Alderman Tammy Shelton
Attorney Larry Leake
Tax Collector Laura Holloway
Finance Officer / Town Administrator Hassena Kassim
Clerk Nancy Thomas

Mayor Norton called the meeting to order at 6:00.

Alderman Gahagan made the motion to accept the Minutes from the regular meeting of April 13.

Alderman Shelton seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

Alderman Shelton made the motion to approve the Minutes from the Budget Workshop of May 5.

Alderman Gahagan seconded the motion.

Alderman Gahagan made the motion to approve the Minutes from the Budget Workshop of May 7.

Alderman Shelton seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

Public Comment:

Glenda Dolbeare was upset that the windowpane fell out of the previous Bluff Mountain building. She said it was fortunate the window did not fall on anyone as it landed in the Street, and Spring Creek Tavern owner Tim Arnette rushed out and cleaned the glass from the Street. Ms. Dolbeare added the ugly awning was still hanging down, and the windows should all be boarded up.

Ms. Dolbeare commented she wanted the Town to keep Stacy Workman as the Chief of Police because she was dependable and got things done.

Agenda:

No requests to be on the agenda.

Town Business

Hassena Kassim

- Discussed the USDA grant and explained there were two papers that need to be signed confirming the Boards support. There will be someone at the June BOA meeting to present a prescreen regarding the \$127,000 grant. Alderman Gahagan asked if the Town was required to match the funds, and Ms. Hassim said no, but the Town may need to add some insurance.

Alderman Gahagan made the motion to support the USDA grant and sign the resolution.

Alderman Shelton seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

- Discussed the Development Block Grant, and gave updates on projects being led by Land of Sky including the upstairs and City Hall on Bridge Street, Street Scaping, The Fire Department, and planters.
She said there would be a meeting at Town Hall on Andrews Ave on May 21 where the Community Development would present their floor design for the Community Center and Jail House to the Board and invite their feedback.
- Discussed the Parking Lot study, the sidewalks (with McGill & Associates), and the Fairview Water project.
- Discussed the completion of the Maintenance Building, and flooring at City Hall on Bridge Street.
- Discussed Pigeon River looking into a spillway.
- Cameras at Town Hall
- The awning at Town Hall
- Restoring power at Town Hall

Ms. Hassim shared Maintenance Supervisor Jeremy Tranthams request to allow Pelletier Electric to upgrade electrical service at the Well Pump due to various issues in the past due to lightning and poor preventative measures. Mr. Trantham described what they needed from Pelletier Electric, consisting of replacing the wire that goes to the pump. He added it has never been changed and really needed to be replaced, and it would be more cost efficient. He had not received the quote yet.

Alderman Shelton made the motion to approve Pelletier Electric replacing the wire to the Sewer Pump.

Alderman Gahagan seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

Entertainment Committee

Sara Jo Litwak said the Entertainment Committee is planning to have Bouncy Houses and Hot Dogs at the Hot Springs Elementary School on July 4th.

Josh Norton, Fire Chief, said the fireworks have been ordered. He said he is talking to someone at the Plant on Andrews Ave about shooting them from that property. He said the dry weather could present a problem, as he is uncomfortable with shooting fireworks if everything is still dry, and if there is a burning ban, that will be a factor as well.

HSVFD

Fire Chief Josh Norton asked the Board to increase the Fire Department Budget as an increase in their budget would improve the VFD for a Match Grant from the Department of Insurance. As it is now, according to the NSDA Standards, the HSVFD is out of compliance. He also wants insurance added for the FD trucks at replacement value. He said a new fire truck costs \$480,000.00.

Ms. Kassim asked if an increase in the budget would qualify the department for airpicks.

Chief Norton said they were already qualified, but the budget range will determine what percentage of the \$140,000 the department and the Town would be responsible for.

Maintenance

Jeremy Trantham, Maintenance Supervisor, requested lettering for two trucks at \$150.00 each. He said he could take the trucks, and the lettering would take a few hours.

Alderman Shelton made the motion to approve lettering two Maintenance Trucks, at \$150.00 per truck. Total being \$300.00

Alderman Gahagan seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

Mr. Trantham requested the Board approve the purchase of Perma Patch to patch and repair potholes in our streets. He said he tried the product, and it held like glue, and he was happy with the results more so than the quick crete they used in the past. He said they could order 50 or 60 lb. bags at a cost of \$1198.00.

Mayor Norton asked Ms. Kassim if funds were available. She said they were, but that would deplete their funds.

Clerk Thomas said Powell Funds could be used for that, but Ms. Kassim said that budget was depleted as well but then said maybe it was not.

Alderman Gahagan made the motion to approve the purchase of 50 60 lb. bags of Perma Patch.

Alderman Shelton seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

Zoning:

No business

Police Department:

Stacy Workman, acting Police Chief, told the Board that the Southern Software was installed and training will begin July 20.

Chief Workman said the Town of Weaverville donated a Portable Street Sign to the Town, and it has been helpful with the excessive traffic the Town has experienced. She said the only problem was she had to change batteries on the sign weekly. She said solar power to the sign would cost around \$100.00, and the sign would then have continual power, and it could be easily moved to various locations as well.

Mayor Norton asked Ms. Kassim if funds were available for the solar power panel. Ms. Kassim said yes.

Chief Workman said she has typed up an ordinance for the Town to prohibit solicitation. The ordinance would allow her to give citations to solicitors, and they would be fined \$50.00 for the first offence.

Business owner Tim Arnett asked if buskers could obtain a permit?

Chief Workman said there was not a clause in the ordinance about that.

She said that would be up to the Town.

Chief Workman said the ordinance mainly addresses people approaching people asking for money and sometimes being intimidating and making people uneasy. She said an ordinance would also allow her to ask for an ID, which would inform her if there were any active warrants on the solicitor. She added safety was a factor.

Chief Workman said another aspect of the ordinance addressed leaving belongings unattended which was mostly for the safety of hikers. She said the ordinance would protect the Town and protect the citizens.

Mayor Norton asked Attorney Leake to review the ordinance. Attorney Leake said he already knew the Town could not impose a civil penalty without reasonable suspicion, or the Town could be opening a can of worms. He has seen this lead to trouble.

The Board agreed to look into the matter further and re-address it at the next regular meeting.

Rebuild Hot Springs Area

Thomas Phillips said RHSA has purchased a radio for Chief Workman and said they would look into seeing if they could help with the awning and upstairs at City Hall on Bridge Street.

He also mentioned seeing the designs for the Community Center and Jail House that would be at the second meeting on May 21.

Mayor Norton and Alderman Gahagan thanked Mr. Phillips.

Tax Collections:

Laura Holloway told the Board she was down to thirteen people who had not paid their taxes. She said collections of 2025 Real Property taxes were at 98.80%.

She said she had sent a request to Attorney Leake to send letters to those who have not paid their taxes, but that list needs to be updated. Attorney Leake said he has not seen that request.

Ms. Holloway asked Attorney Leake not to send the letters yet, if he does receive the request, until she updates the list.

Ms. Holloway clarified that her request to release the \$6.20 was made because State Statutes require even a small amount must be approved by the Board.

Mayor Norton:

- Discussed reviewing and looking over Land of Sky Grant Administration, along with Attorney Leake. She asked the Board if they would approve the contract with McGill and Associates.

Alderman Gahagan made the motion to approve the contract with McGill and Associates.

Alderman Shelton seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

- Discussed a Hazzard Mitigation Plan, explaining in 2021 the Town of Hot Springs joined Buncombe and Madison County in adopting the HMP. She added two sections of the updated plan specific to Hot Springs and Madison County. She said Mars Hill has adopted the plan, and the County will be adopting the plan on May 13, and the Town of Marshall will adopt the plan also. She asked the Board if they would approve and adopt the Hazzard Mitigation Plan.

Alderman Gahagan made the motion to approve and adopt the Hazzard Mitigation Plan.

Alderman Shelton seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

- Kristen Robinson asked Mayor Norton if all the grant information with FEMA, SRF, and DEQ, and other subjects discussed were available to the public. Mayor Norton said yes, the information is on the Town's Website.
- Asked if the Town of Hot Springs will participate in America's 250-year anniversary. Ms. Robinson, a Board member of the Hot Springs Library, said the library planned to participate in a celebration. Sara Jo Litwak said the Entertainment committee will just have the Bouncy Houses and Hot Dogs/ Ms. Robinson said she would get a list of events from Kim at the Library. Ms. Robinson added the library will be doing documentaries with people that have lived in Hot Springs.

- **7:03.** Mayor Norton asked for a motion to go into executive session.

Alderman Shelton made the motion to go into executive session.

Alderman Gahagan seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

8:03 pm. Mayor Norton asked for a motion to return to regular session. Alderwoman Gahagan made the motion to return to regular session, Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion, all were in favor.

In executive session, the Board discussed legal matters and property purchase.

8:04 pm. Mayor Norton asked for a motion to purchase two plots of land located on River Road, belonging to current owners Swayne R. and Sandra Franklin, and Elizabeth Roberts, each lot containing 18 acres for a total acreage of 36 acres. The total purchase price of the property will be \$800,000.00. The funds for this purchase are from a grant provided by Office of State Budget and Management. Alderwoman Shelton made the motion to purchase the property, Alderwoman Gahagan seconded the motion, all were in favor.

8:04 pm. Mayor Norton asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alderwoman Gahagan made a motion to adjourn, Alderwoman Shelton seconded the motion, all were in favor.

Approved: all

Abigail Norton
Mayor Abigail Norton

Other

Date 7-13-2024